

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-6 and 25-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akram in view of Irving. The examiner states the " Akram does not show wherein the photoresist layer is removed using a downstream plasma process including hydrogen or deuterium and substantially no oxidizing component." For this the examiner relies on the Irving et al patent (US 3,837,856). In the office action dated 4/11/01 the examiner states that "Irving teaches that photoresist may be removed from a substrate using a downstream plasma process including hydrogen or deuterium and substantially no oxidizing component." This forms the basis of the 103(a) rejection.

Contrary to this statement by the examiner the Irving patent clearly teaches removing photoresist with oxygen. In column 3 lines 11-14 the Irving et al patent states, "[A]ny one of a number of gases can be utilized such a oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, and helium. Oxygen, by way of example, has been found to perform quite satisfactorily." Therefore, unlike the examiners statement, the Irving et al. patent clearly teaches the use of oxygen, which is a very strong oxidizing component, as its best mode. The oxidizing property of oxygen is well known to all persons of ordinary skill in the art. The Irving et al. patent clearly teaches away from the instant invention and cannot be properly combined with the Akram patent.

In light of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

While it is believed that the instant response places the application in condition for allowance, should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned in order to expeditiously resolve any outstanding issues.



To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an Extension of Time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any fees in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the deposit account of Texas Instruments Incorporated, Account No. 20-0668.

Respectfully submitted,

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